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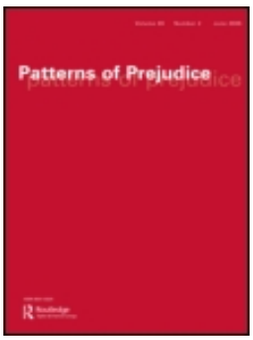

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J. Kaplan

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JEFFREY KAPLAN

The post-war paths of occult national socialism: from Rockwell and Madole to Manson

ABSTRACT Kaplan takes an in-depth look at the religious and cultic aspects of American national socialism in the post-war era. Beginning with the founder of the American Nazi Party, George Lincoln Rockwell, in the late 1950s, he follows the development of occult beliefs and practices in the tiny and fractious American neo-Nazi movement. He emphasizes as well the brief turn to revolutionary violence in the 1970s through an examination of the National Socialist Liberation Front, and, finally, examines the attraction of Charles Manson and his followers to the occult fringes of the national socialist 'movement'. The article is built primarily on fieldwork, in-depth interviews with adherents of occult national socialist beliefs, and primary source materials from the 1960s to the present.

KEYWORDS *American Nazi Party, antisemitism, Charles Manson, Christian Identity, George Lincoln Rockwell, James Madole, national socialism, neo-Nazism, occult, racism, satanism*

. . . someone did say that prior to 1945 we were a party, since 1945 we have been a religion
—James Mason[1]

The Commander

The 1967 assassination of the American Nazi Party (ANP) leader George Lincoln Rockwell had a tremendous impact on the evolving Euro-American radical right. At a stroke, the primary candidate for leader of the trans-Atlantic movement was removed from the scene, leaving not only the ANP in turmoil with no obvious successor to 'the Commander', but returning the World Union of National Socialists (WUNS) to its original essence: a quarrelsome band of radical nationalists with no central focus to their interminable arguments and Utopian scheming. In assessing the impact of Rockwell's loss, we need but to note the ambivalent sentiments of Swedish national socialist leader Göran Assar Oredsson who in 1956 founded the Nordiska Rikspartiet (NRP) in Malmö, Sweden:

1 Interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996.

PATTERNS OF PREJUDICE © Institute for Jewish Policy Research, vol. 35, no. 3, 2001
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> I can never forgive the USA's war against Europe, even if the guilt is not to be put on the US National Socialists . . . But I want to stress that my friendship with Lincoln Rockwell was total, and so was our co-operation with him as a person and American NS-leader.[2]

Rockwell's death in fact left a vacuum from which the highly fragmented national socialist world never recovered. Within that vacuum there was considerable space for the occult paths of national socialism to take root and grow. This should come as little surprise. Occult currents were never far from the surface of the Third Reich's inner circle,[3] and even so avowedly an atheistic figure as Rockwell would confide to his closest confidants his own deeply mystical attachment to the figure of Adolf Hitler. In this, Rockwell was always of two minds. On the outside, his approach to religion had a strongly utilitarian quality to it. How better to awaken the slumbering white masses to the imminent danger he saw to the race than by means of a religious appeal? It is notable that in 1958 Rockwell did not see the Jewish conquest of the nations of the earth as yet accomplished. Such was the tenor of the radical right of the 1950s and 1960s. It was felt that, if only people could be awakened, there was still time to reclaim them from the dread machinations of the International Jew. But how to awaken the sleeping masses before it was too late?

The answer occurred to key Rockwell associates early on, but the Commander was skeptical until it was made clear that the religious strategy was a mere Trojan Horse. Why not link national socialism to religion and, in particular, to Christianity? For Rockwell, national socialism was already his religion in every sense of the term, and he revered the figure of Adolf Hitler in clearly soteriological terms.[4] In his autobiography, *This Time the World!*, and even more openly in the writings of two generations of movement hagiographers, Rockwell describes his own conversion to national socialism in explicitly religious terms.[5]

First, there was the motif of the spiritual quest—in this case, in the San Diego public library, in a frantic search for the truth underlying the dross of

2 Göran Assar Oredsson, interview with Dr Heléne Lööw, 1996. A brief history of Oredsson's NRP is provided in Göran Assar Oredsson, *News of the NRP*, undated pamphlet distributed by the NRP.

3 Nicholas Godrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism* (New York: New York University Press 1985, 1992).

4 For a convincing argument along these lines, see James M. Rhodes, *The Hitler Movement: A Modern Millenarian Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press 1980). For coverage of the internal debate within NS circles, see Jeffrey Kaplan, 'Religiosity and the radical right: toward the creation of a new ethnic identity', in Jeffrey Kaplan and Tore Bjørgo (eds), *Brotherhoods of Nation and Race: The Emergence of a Euro-American Racist Subculture* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press 1998). For extracts from the relevant texts, see Jeffrey Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power: A Sourcebook on the Radical Right* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira 2000), 261–5.

5 This account is primarily based on three sources: George Lincoln Rockwell, *This Time the World!* (Arlington, VA: Parliament House 1963); William L. Pierce, *Lincoln Rockwell: A National Socialist Life* (Arlington, VA: NS Publications 1969), and New Order, *The Religion of Lincoln Rockwell* (Milwaukee, WI: New Order n.d.).

everyday events. Then there was the discovery of *Mein Kampf* on a back shelf in a musty bookshop. This was a truly life-changing experience, and William Pierce's description of Rockwell's fascination with the book eerily presages the scene in Pierce's notorious apocalyptic novel, *The Turner Diaries*, in which the protagonist, Earl Turner, is allowed to read the Organization's Holy Book, which, like Rockwell's reading of *Mein Kampf*, suddenly drew away the veil of illusion that masked the numinous realities of the world. In Pierce's accounts, neither Rockwell nor the fictional Turner would ever again see the world in the same way following this deeply mystical experience.[6] But there was more. According to intimate comrades, Rockwell confessed to having a series of extraordinarily vivid and nearly identical prophetic dreams in which, in a variety of everyday contexts, he was called aside from crowded commonplace situations to a private room where standing before him was his newfound god, Adolf Hitler.[7] It was not long before Rockwell was moved to build a literal alter to his deity, hanging a Nazi flag that covered an entire wall of his home, under which he placed a table containing a bust of Hitler illuminated by three candles.

Having come face to face with the ineffable, little wonder that Rockwell would be dubious about linking national socialism with any other religion. But the United States is a deeply religious nation, and to build a mass movement there, it is essential that this reality be addressed. As a competitor in the religious marketplace, national socialism clearly had little mass appeal. While far more secular in orientation than the States, Europe too evinced a spiritual void that the World Union of National Socialists hoped to fill. Finding a way to graft national socialism with Christianity was one option. The established racialist doctrine of Christian Identity suggested yet other possibilities.

The syncretic melding of national socialism with Christianity was an obvious non-starter on both sides of the Atlantic. In the United States, the intensely negative association of the term 'Nazi' had a certain utility to Rockwell in gaining attention for his fledgling movement; but to seek to link the much demonized figure of Hitler to Christ, even obliquely, would surely have aroused outrage greater than even Rockwell was prepared to contemplate while at the same time risking alienating his base of national socialist true believers.

Prospects for success for such an endeavour in Europe were little better. Besides the predictable public outrage, there was the problem of the state churches to deal with. It was a problem that was never fully solved in Hitler's Germany, despite the terrifying power at the disposal of the state to enforce compliance with its will.[8] But Rockwell believed that the organizational structure of Christianity could serve as a model for a national socialist church structure that one day, after the 'great awakening' of the European masses to

6 Pierce, *Lincoln Rockwell*, 12.
7 Ibid., 15–16. Pierce dates these dreams 1957–8.
8 Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich*, 2 vols, 2nd edn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1988).

the clarion call of the *Führer*'s vision, would supplant 'Jewish Christianity'. And what a shock it would be, Rockwell wrote, for the Jews (and no doubt for most Christians) to wake up one day to find 'thousands of priests and monks suddenly throw off their habits and robes . . . and reveal the full glory of their National Socialist organization'.[9]

The prime mover in this plan seems to have been the German WUNS leader, Bruno Ludtke, although as early as 1957 Rockwell seems to have toyed with the idea of creating some sort of national socialist Christian front group.[10] The Ludtke/Rockwell discussions began in 1962 when Ludtke, the German translator of *This Time the World!*, suggested that passages dealing critically with Christianity be softened. For Ludtke, the Catholic Church presented a marvellous structure through which Rockwell could speak with the 'political authority of the Führer and the moral authority of the Pope'.[11]

This unlikely aggregation was to be called the Christian Naturalist Church whose primary dogma appeared to emphasize the similarities that Ludtke and Rockwell perceived to exist between Hitler and Jesus. The historic role of Christianity in persecuting the Jews made the proposition of creating a false flag form of 'Christianity' to accomplish this purpose doubly attractive. Ironically, the WUNS member most skeptical of the enterprise was England's Colin Jordan, who in the 1990s would devote much of his writing in his journal *Gothic Ripples* to strongly religious themes of a decidedly Odinist flavour.[12]

Of course, the Christian Naturalist Church, like so many of Rockwell's stratagems, went nowhere. The press of events, the rush of ideas, the constant pressures of leading an organization boasting a bare handful of capable followers, and incessant street confrontations, allowed Rockwell little time to see any scheme through to fruition. But if the Christian Naturalist Church was not to take the movement by storm, Rockwell's flirtation with Identity Christianity had greater potential. Identity, after all, in its earlier incarnation as British Israelism, already had roots in England, while in the 1950s modern Christian Identity was emerging in a big way on the American racist scene.[13] Rockwell believed that Identity could serve as a cover for the emergence of a trans-Atlantic national socialist revolution. He would not be able to see the

9 Letter from George Lincoln Rockwell to Bruno Ludtke, 11 February 1963, in Frederick J. Simonelli, *American Führer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press 1999), 223. Much of the religiously oriented material contained in *American Führer* is reprised in Frederick J. Simonelli, 'American Nazis and Christian Identity', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1996, 43–54.

10 The 1957 discussions took place with Emory Burke, an antisemite later charged but not convicted in the 1958 bombing of an Atlanta synagogue. See Simonelli, 'American Nazis'.

11 Letter from Ludtke to Rockwell, 15 May 1962, in Simonelli, *American Führer*, 220.

12 Ibid., 220–5. On Jordan's more recent writings, see the ongoing 'The way ahead' series in the 1995–6 issues of *Gothic Ripples*. The series in fact is strongly reminiscent of many of the ideas broached by James Madole in his 1970s 'New Atlantis' series, which will be considered in greater detail below.

13 The definitive history of this development is Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1994).

plan through to completion, as he was felled by an assassin's bullet before significant Euro-American linkages could be established in the Identity world. But, unlike the fanciful Christian Naturalist Church, Christian Identity did have some appeal beyond American shores.

Rockwell's introduction to the esoteric world of Identity Christianity took place in the early 1960s through his friendship with Richard Butler, then an engineer in California and a disciple of Wesley Swift, the father of American racialist Identity. Butler introduced Swift to Rockwell, who in any case was well acquainted with a number of Identity figures of the era.[14] Rockwell proposed an abortive plan for some form of merger between the ANP and Swift's organization.[15]

Rockwell apparently saw an opportunity to infiltrate the Identity movement and to turn it gradually to national socialism. For the purpose, he tapped an ideal candidate, Ralph Forbes, a young ANP captain and the commander of the organization's Western Division who even then was known to possess a marked mystical streak. In 1965 Rockwell laid his scheme before Forbes who enthusiastically accepted the assignment.[16] Rockwell would not live to see the outcome of the plan. Forbes's 'conversion' eventually transformed covert operation to true belief, and he remains to this day an Identity minister in Arkansas. Other ANP stalwarts also drifted to Christian Identity: James Warner comes to mind in this regard.[17]

James Hartung Madole: linking national socialism to American satanism

James Hartung Madole—a contemporary of Rockwell—was an obscure East Coast national socialist figure too idiosyncratic by far for the Commander's American Nazi Party. What launched Madole to relative prominence was a 1954 investigation of American fascism by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). The Committee, better known as the cutting edge of the Red Scare of the 1940s and 1950s, in the interests of even-handedness occasionally opened hearings in regard to the activities of such right-wing figures as Gerald L. K. Smith.[18] By 1954, however, the HUAC had opened more serious hearings on domestic fascist groups. By then, books such as the influential tome by Ralph Lord Roy, *Apostles of Discord* (1953), had given added credence to earlier investigations of post-war fascism by authors such as the pseudonymous John Roy Carlson that argued that American fascism,

14 Simonelli, *American Führer*, 217. On Swift's role, see Barkun, ch. 4, and Jeffrey Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America: Millenarian Movements from the Far Right to the Children of Noah* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press 1996), ch. 2.

15 Simonelli, *American Führer*, 226.

16 Ibid., 226–7.

17 Jeffrey Kaplan, 'Right wing violence in North America', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1995, 56–7.

18 House Committee on Un-American Activities (hereafter HUAC), *Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States (Gerald L. K. Smith)*, 79th Congress, 2d sess., 1946.

though much diminished, had survived the war.[19] These 1954 hearings specifically equated fascism with communism.

The Committee quickly set its sights on James Hartung Madole and his National Renaissance Party (NRP) as the prime exemplar of contemporary American neo-fascism. Madole, an admirer of Francis Parker Yockey's *Imperium*, retained a strong interest in events in Europe, as well as the emerging Third World liberation struggles. However, his true legacy to the movement was his 1960s efforts to link national socialist doctrine to the occult and, in particular, to the worlds of theosophy and explicit satanism. Madole was largely an isolated figure at this stage of his life, communicating his highly eclectic message through the pages of his *National Renaissance Bulletin* until his untimely death from cancer at the age of fifty-one. After his death, Madole was quickly forgotten. Today, however, Madole is experiencing something of a personal renaissance in the writings of movement figures on both sides of the Atlantic who hail him as a visionary whose thought was decades ahead of its time.[20] Moreover, Madole helped to plant the seeds for renewed trans-Atlantic co-operation through his European contacts, especially in Sweden.

Yet, at the same time, Madole's NRP endorsed a strongly nativist platform that contrasted sharply with the borderless racial nationalism that the NRP held equally dear. It is a schizophrenia that afflicts the movement to this day. It would therefore be valuable to consider the NRP's original nine-point platform, which appears to hold two central, and utterly contradictory, tenets: racial nationalism and nativist Americanism. Published in the October 1953 issue of the *National Renaissance Bulletin*,[21] the platform's preamble affirms a dedication to the welfare of the racial collective over the interests of any individual, and states that the current political parties serve 'the interests of international Jewry'. The preamble also reveals a constellation of beliefs that would become ubiquitous in the movement: a fear of declining White birthrates, fear of intermarriage (especially with Jews), but of greatest resonance, a pre-occupation with purity and disease, both in the metaphorical and clinical senses.

This 1953 document is a remarkable encapsulation of the dilemmas facing the movement today. Save for the somewhat archaic references to the menace of 'international Communism', the same themes that are endlessly rehashed in contemporary movement discourse are set forth. There are in these nine

19 Ralph Lord Roy, *Apostles of Discord* (Boston: Beacon Press 1953); John Roy Carlson, *Under Cover* (New York: Dutton 1943), and John Roy Carlson, *The Plotters* (New York: Dutton 1946).

20 'James Hartung Madole: father of post-war fascism', *Nexus*, November 1995. Madole's Utopian vision of a *völkisch* national socialist America was serialized in his *National Renaissance Bulletin* throughout the mid-1970s as 'The New Atlantis: a blueprint for the Aryan "Garden of Eden" in North America'. Cf. Rick Cooper, 'A brief history of the white nationalist movement', in Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 417–38.

21 James H. Madole, 'The program of the National Renaissance Party', *National Renaissance Bulletin*, October 1953, 3–4. The document is reproduced in HUAC, *Preliminary Report on Neo-Fascist and Hate Groups*, 1954, exhibit 2, 21–2.

points a number of remarkable juxtapositions. Point one, an exhortation to racial nationalism, is a staple of modern movement discourse. It is written so as to embrace the Christian Identity doctrine of all creation being returned to its original place and status as based on the Identity hermeneutic of Genesis, but it as easily fits the contemporaneous pattern of the rise of the Non-Aligned Movement on the world stage, or the later convergence of interests between American black nationalists such as the Nation of Islam and the white separatist movements of the 1980s.[22] Indeed, Madole would have a number of successful conclaves with black nationalist organizations.[23] Finally, the reference to Jews having assumed control in Washington presaged the ZOG discourse just as the reference to Jews as bearers of disease linked Madole's antisemitism to a far older tradition of antisemitic discourse. Yet it is significant that the NRP's platform, despite the claim of being an avowedly white nationalist party, was centred on world affairs first, with American concerns added almost as an afterthought. Here in 1953 are the seeds for the creation of a transnational racial consciousness that is only today fully taking root. Points three and four, dealing as they do with the forced separation of the races and the Jew as an 'alien virus' in the pure bloodstream of the United States, are standard fare for the time, and have aged not at all in movement discourse.

Of greater interest are points five and six. Here in stark juxtaposition lies the central contradiction of the post-war movement. Point five is a purely nativist exhortation to look inward, to 'buy American' and utilize science to produce artificially whatever resources cannot be obtained domestically. The sentiment could have been drawn from any number of Depression-era demagogues as easily as it could echo the most fanatically suspicious member of the militia movement of the 1990s. Yet how to reconcile this jingoistic ideal with the international alliance structure mandated by point six, demanding regional alliances with the Arab states and with each of the defeated Axis powers?

Within this riddle are two important observations that hold true of the radical right throughout its modern history. First, antisemitism and its concomitant element of conspiracy theories, an intense quest for 'purity' (be it of blood or of the natural environment) and a sense of vulnerability—of a race under siege and in imminent peril of extinction—are the movement's driving force. All else is of secondary import, and it is under the banner of antisemitism that any number of contradictory statements and actions can be rationalized by a milieu that is otherwise highly resistant to accepting contradictory information.

Second, for all of its seeming isolation, the radical right is well aware of world events, and is on the whole probably better read and more thoroughly

22 See Mattias Gardell, 'Black and white unite in fight? On the inter-action between black and white radical racialists', in Heléne Lööw and Jeffrey Kaplan, *Sekter, sektmotståndare och sekteristiska miljöer, en förnyad granskning* (forthcoming).

23 'James Hartung Madole', 23.

informed on current events than most citizens. This stems from the ceaseless search for 'hidden truths', the bits and pieces of data that are assembled from an eclectic and wide-ranging corpus of sources to assemble in jigsaw-puzzle fashion a picture of the hidden hand underlying the seemingly random course of everyday events. In the process, however, the denizens of the radical right wing come unconsciously to mirror the world they so despise. Thus point one's unconscious encapsulation of the rise of Third World nationalism that would culminate only two years later in the Bandung Conference and the formal creation of the Third Path of the Non-Aligned Movement. And so too point six's suggested alliance pattern at a time when NATO would soon be supplemented by 'pactomania', the series of US-led regional alliances in Asia and Latin America. In many ways, the radical right serves as a kind of caged canary, the bird that miners would take into coal mines to warn of hidden dangers long before they reached the level of consciousness. The study of this esoteric subculture can foretell national controversies yet to take place.[24]

The final points merely seek to institute the practices of the Third Reich in the United States of the 1950s. Point seven is little more than a lionization of the German National Socialist economic model, while point eight has much the same intent in the political sphere. Point nine completes the trilogy in the area of education.

Like all American radical right-wing groups, the NRP never amounted to much in terms of numbers, with estimates running as high as 700 or as low as 50.[25] Madole, an inveterate street-corner orator, attracted a small coterie of like-minded followers, a larger group who attended the meetings to heckle or disrupt the proceedings, and a shifting crowd of curious onlookers amused by the spectacle. Yet the group's importance transcends mere numbers. Through its ranks or in the pages of the *National Renaissance Bulletin* passed a number of key figures in the American radical right. The head of the NRP's Nazi-uniformed bodyguards for the diminutive Madole, for example, was Matt Koehl, later to take his uniform into the service of George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party, an organization he would inherit and through his inept leadership decimate following the death of the Commander. Eustace Mullins, the acolyte of Ezra Pound and later an influential conspiracy theorist, found his early voice in the *National Renaissance Bulletin*, as did such intellectual fascists as Fredrick Charles Weiss and another key figure in the later American Nazi Party, Dan Burros, the author of the ANP's *Stormtrooper Manual*, and sometime Klansman and Odinist. The Jewish

24 This controversial fact has been noted by a bare handful of researchers. For an erudite exposition, see Godrick-Clarke, 1: 'fantasies can achieve a causal status once they have been institutionalized in beliefs, values and social groups. Fantasies are also an important symptom of impending cultural changes and political action.'

25 The 1954 HUAC report estimates 'anywhere from 200 to 700 persons', although even in this source the numbers were seen as sharply declining after 1954 (HUAC, *Preliminary Report*, 10). The more realistic lower figure is from Gordon Hall, a contemporary observer of the scene. Hall is quoted in John George and Laird Wilcox, *American Extremists, Supremacists, Klansmen, Communists and Others* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books 1996), 325.

Burros, who once seemed destined for a career as a cantor, proved the greatest embarrassment, however, committing suicide in the home of government informant Roy Frankhauser when newspaper revelations of his orthodox Jewish childhood effectively ended his movement career.[26] Of interest to the genesis of a post-war trans-Atlantic movement was the NRP's creation of a grandiosely named Overseas Office under the command of Mana Truhill, whose real name was, incredibly, Emmanuel Trujillo.[27] The NRP's primary overseas contact, according to the HUAC report, was the Swedish father of Holocaust denial, Einar Åberg.[28]

James Madole and his NRP played an important role in paving the way for the more flamboyant and charismatic Rockwell and the World Union of National Socialists. But of greater import, by the 1960s, was that Madole's occult explorations had begun to open new pathways from the occult and neo-pagan revival into the world of antisemitism and explicit national socialism. In truth, an examination of the *National Renaissance Bulletin* over the nearly three decades of its existence reveals little to recommend it to the movement or to historians of the period other than its mystical explorations along the path first blazed by William Dudley Pelley in the 1930s.[29] Madole's writing style was uninspired,[30] his support for the Soviet Union under the banner of world antisemitism was, to be charitable, naive, and his antisemitic screeds and coverage of world and local events added new dimensions of tedium to the term 'superficial'.

Moreover, Madole's predictions of American economic and political collapse and the ascendance of world totalitarianism of both the left and the right, which he repeated with all the imagination of the greyest Stalinist *apparatchik* imaginable, read today as the stuff of farce rather than serious propaganda. But Madole's occultism was of another level altogether. Here, his florid imagination both reflects the occultist currents of the cultic milieu of his day and serves as a kind of archetype of imagined history in which the white race is credited with every achievement of human civilization. Best stated in his ongoing 'New Atlantis' series in the *National Renaissance Bulletin* of the 1970s, Madole outlines his conception of the past glories of the race and

26 On Burros, see A. M. Rosenthal and Arthur Gelb, *One More Victim: The Life and Death of a Jewish Nazi* (New York: New American Library 1967), or more briefly in Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 33–5. NRP members and associates are noted in George and Wilcox; HUAC, *Preliminary Report*; 'James Hartung Madole'; and especially in the pages of the long-running *National Renaissance Bulletin*. On Frankhauser and his 'work' for the Bureau of Alchohol, Tobacco and Firearms, see George and Wilcox, 232–7.

27 George and Wilcox, 324–5. According to this text, many believe the highly eccentric (even by the standards of this milieu) Trujillo was an informant for, among others, the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith.

28 HUAC, *Preliminary Report*, 5.

29 'America's SS—The Silver Shirts!', *New Order*, no. 113, November–December 1994, 3–4, 6, 12. Cf. William Dudley Pelley, *The Door to Revelation: An Intimate Biography* (Asheville, NC: Foundation Fellowship 1935).

30 Sharing this view is Michael Aquino, *The Church of Satan*, 3rd edn (San Francisco: Michael Aquino 1993), 272.

the chiliastic world to come. In his own words, Madole states that the series' purpose is to 'impart to ARYAN MAN both his immense racial heritage stretching back over ONE MILLION YEARS into prehistoric times and his forthcoming Divine Mission to create a higher type of humanity beside which mankind of the 20th century will appear as mental and physical anachronisms'.[31] Built of an idiosyncratic reading of history and such spiritualist sources as Madame Blavatsky and the theosophists, Madole writes:

> The subhuman elements in our society, dominated by the accursed Jew, can only intimidate and govern Aryan Man while he remains in abject ignorance of his glorious racial heritage derived from the hoary archives of Lost Atlantis, Tibet and Mother India. In short, as long as Aryan man remains Christian he will inevitably remain a slave to the Jew who imposed his Semitic heresy upon the Aryan mind![32]

This formulation was not new, but what was more important was that, unlike other antisemites of his generation, James Madole was not taken by surprise by the occult explosion of the late 1960s. Rather, he was a man ahead of his time for whom the new proliferation of religious experimentation was tailor-made. Pushing ever further into these explorations, Madole was quickly aware of the formation of Anton LaVey's Church of Satan (COS), and maintained an active and friendly correspondence with LaVey himself. Moreover, such explicitly racialist satanic organizations as the Detroit-based Order of the Black Ram, formed by the Michigan state organizer of the NRP, Seth Klippoth, may be traced to Madole's early influence; and it maintained close contact with him and his NRP throughout the 1970s.[33]

Interestingly, the Order of the Black Ram did not choose to make its connections to Madole or its racialist origins and intent part of its own official history, emphasizing instead only its connection to the Church of Satan.[34] The Church of Satan's internal correspondence, however, is much more illuminating on the matter. This material well illustrates both the intertwining of occult and racialist belief systems and the transnational appeal of racialism's occult path. The material is reproduced in Michael Aquino's unpublished history of the Church of Satan, in which he got his start in the world of satanism and where, before his break with Anton LaVey, he was a member of the COS's governing Council of Nine. LaVey's attitude towards Madole is instructive:

31 Madole, 'The New Atlantis', part 8, *National Renaissance Bulletin*, July–August 1975, 5.

32 Ibid., part 9, *National Renaissance Bulletin*, March–April 1976, 4.

33 'James Hartung Madole', 25–6. The events are described by Madole himself in the *National Renaissance Bulletin*, March and April 1974. A sample of Madole's early recruiting pitch to Church of Satan adherents is preserved in a letter to COS member Stuart Levine dated 17 September 1974: '. . . I am trying to find a small group of people [and] utilize their services in breaking some of our NRP officers and men into the more advanced concepts of occult philosophy' (Aquino, 272). It is rather par for the course among American antisemitic leaders that at no time does Madole remark on the Jewish-sounding name of his correspondent, nor does his antisemitism inhibit him from taking Levine into his confidence.

34 'A brief history of satanism in Detroit', in *An Introduction to the Order of the Black Ram* (Warren, MI: Order of the Black Ram n.d.), 1–2.

> The N.R.P. headed by Madole, is composed largely of acned, bucolic types transplanted to New York. They spend their time getting jeered at in street demonstrations. Yes, the Nazis did it too, but they had a fresh approach. Nowadays swastikas sell books and movies . . . I know Madole personally, and have been to N.R.P. headquarters. Even have a card. They would do anything for us. So would [the] Klan for that matter. I do not endorse either, but acknowledge camaraderie from any source. Madole is actually a nice chap who is doing his thing. No need to fret over Hell's Angel's types. They will come in handy one day, whether they be American Nazi Party or Jewish Defense League.[35]

LaVey's genial tolerance of Madole and the NRP was typical enough of the COS and of the wider cultic milieu, but at the same time internal efforts were begun both to co-opt the NRP and to distance the Church from overt associations with national socialism. The latter undertaking, in Aquino's account, involved both LaVey and Aquino. The immediate source of their concern was the activities of Seth Klippoth in Detroit. LaVey had been apprised of the news that, soon after his resignation from the COS, Klippoth and other NRP activists brought their newly formed Order of the Black Ram to an Odinist gathering in Toronto that included representatives of Canada's Western Guard and the National Socialist White People's Party (Matt Koehl's renamed American Nazi Party). Moreover, Madole made subsequent efforts through Klippoth and others to recruit COS members into their organizations.[36] The result was an intensive round of internal correspondence that would define the Church of Satan's, as well as the later Temple of Set's, official position on Nazism.

It is important to note that neither Aquino nor LaVey saw German National Socialism and the figure of Adolf Hitler in a negative light. To Aquino, *Mein Kampf*, if read with the mental resolve to eliminate its references to antisemitism as a mere personality quirk of the *Führer*, is an unrivalled political textbook whose efficacy meets the primary satanic criteria for excellence: it and the governmental doctrines that were propounded under its blueprint work, for they 'are the true essence of political power'.[37] It is with antisemitism, however, that the COS parts company with Nazism:

> Now you may understand why all avowed neo-Nazi groups are pariahs in the eyes of the Church of Satan. First, they know nothing of the true keys of power employed by Hitler. Instead, they glorify the anti-Semitism and the more ostentatious attributes of Nazi Germany which have been glamorized by Hollywood. Secondly, they openly champion Nazi Germany by name, setting themselves up publicly against the Auschwitz taboo. Thirdly, they propose 1930s solutions to 1970s problems.[38]

Aquino concludes with the accurate observation that these 'Hollywood Nazis' are regarded by most Americans as 'refugees from a loony bin', and that, if

35 Letter from Anton LaVey to Michael Aquino, 24 June 1974, in Aquino, 270.
36 Aquino, 269–70. On the Western Guard and other far-right movements in Canada, see Stanley R. Barrett, *Is God a Racist?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1987).
37 Aquino, 271.
38 Ibid.

their longed-for right-wing backlash did occur in the United States, they would be the first to be eliminated since an American *Führer* would appear in a business suit rather than a swastika armband, and would be touting the values of America in 1776 rather than Germany in the 1930s.[39]

LaVey himself endorses these sentiments, but reveals a more Machiavellian turn of mind. Based on his own experience with the NRP and its leader, LaVey sets out the foundation for much of the later interaction between the satanic and the national socialist worlds that would be so prominent a feature of the 1990s movement:

> The N.R.P. is enamored with the Church of Satan. Their racist ideals are also worn on their sleeves and, I believe, are as removable as their armbands . . . symbolism and symbolism alone supplied their identity. That is how it is with most outlaw groups. There are only two ingredients necessary for their existence: a symbol and a scapegoat. The N.R.P. already has the swastika, but obviously is drawn to our sigil. They have the 'Jews and Niggers', but if properly propagandized could transfer their wrath to our enemies. How? Through just such extensions of propaganda as *Occult Reich* which have emerged from *Satanic Rituals* . . . [Their belief patterns are simple and we] are dealing with intelligence levels on which ideals and imagery are easily interchangeable . . . All my life I've been the weakling, [they think,] but with my swastika I am strong. My Satanic amulet gives me power. I'm not a misfit anymore, with pimples and a heart murmur and flat feet. What does it matter if I can't play baseball or spell too good? So what if I can't get a girl—I got my armband . . . Maybe we can get the C/S to help us defeat the kikes and niggers so America can be pure again . . .[40]

It is this desperate search for allies and acceptance in the face of nearly universal hostility and scorn that makes the national socialist enthusiasts under Madole such ideal candidates for recruitment into the satanist churches. In the event, LaVey proved prophetic, for this would be a major pattern in the milieu of the transnational radical right of the 1990s.

James Hartung Madole died in 1978. His mother Grace tried to keep the already nearly defunct National Renaissance Party alive for the last two years of her life, to little effect. In an irony that perfectly symbolized Madole's life's work, the last leader of the NRP died in a common street mugging and the organization's records were scattered to the winds over the blood-spattered highway.[41]

Yet it was Madole who did much to establish trans-Atlantic contacts, open new paths to national socialist beliefs, and keep the flame of national socialism alive in the bitterly hostile post-war years. His organizational model, not to mention the use of uniformed activists, predated Rockwell's own American Nazi Party, and it is likely that much of Rockwell's early organizational structure was borrowed *in toto* from the NRP, through the defection of Matt Koehl among others from the NRP to the American Nazi Party.

39 Ibid.
40 Letter from LaVey to Aquino, 5 July 1974, in Aquino, 271–2.
41 'James Hartung Madole', 26.

It is true that national socialist occultism does not appeal to all national socialists, and even today is a minority trend in the world movement. But in the 1990s it is a vital and much travelled path, whereas, in the 1950s and early 1960s, it was virtually unheard of—especially in the United States. Madole was simply decades ahead of his time, and his current obscurity is very much a product of this isolation.

Pray for victory and not an end to slaughter
—Joseph Tommasi[42]

The movement today: James Mason, Joseph Tommasi and the National Socialist Liberation Front

The most striking changes at the cutting edge of the current national socialist movement involve the increasingly open mysticism, and indeed religiosity, that has always been the hidden face of the radical right. Today, the occult paths are well trodden. Where Rockwell's mystical experience of unity with the *Führer* had to be hidden and shared with only his most trusted comrades, the occult has become a ubiquitous part of the modern race movement. With the trend towards an increasingly open racial mysticism, there has been a concomitant drift towards syncretism. That is, such seemingly incompatible ideological mixtures as Christian Identity and national socialism, or national socialism and explicit satanism, are becoming increasingly the norm.

The adherents of the movement may well be dubbed the 'children of Madole', so prevalent have currents of national socialist mysticism—ranging from satanism to Odinism—become within its ranks. While the Rockwell generation has gradually faded from the scene, a few of the movement elders remain active and influential. Colin Jordan in England continues to publish at irregular intervals his newsletter *Gothic Ripples*. William Pierce, author of *The Turner Diaries*, through his writings in such national socialist journals as *Attack!*, has had a considerable impact on the trans-Atlantic racist movement.[43] Nonetheless, this generation is disappearing. Göran Assar Oredsson announced his 'retirement' from active politics and sold his archives to a Swedish academic research institution. The 'old fighters' who remain on the scene are simply that: old. With rare exceptions, they are no longer fighters, although one such notable exception is the ebullient Finnish expatriate activist Nils Mandel. Mandel's role is to link the movement's Eastern and Western European activists with a source of stickers and published propaganda in London. He is a fixture at the annual skinhead celebration-cum-riots that mark Rudolf Hess's birthday in Belgium.[44] Yet his services are increasingly anachronistic, given the ease with which materials may be downloaded from racist websites.

42 Joseph Tommasi, *Building the Revolutionary Party* (n.p., n.d.).

43 For a representative selection of the National Alliance's 'greatest hits', see *The Best of Attack! Revolutionary Voice of the National Alliance* (Hillsboro, WV: National Vanguard Books 1984, 1992).

44 Interview with Nils Mandel, Stockholm, 19 August 1995. In 1996, the Belgians grew tired of hosting this chaotic event and it was moved to Trollhattan, Sweden, where violent clashes

One of the more controversial American activists of the immediate post-Rockwell generation is James Mason, currently associated with the Universal Order. Mason is a survivor whose national socialist pedigree must hold considerable allure for the younger generation of activists. His long history with the movement, his current international following and the syncretic appeal of the Universal Order make Mason worthy of some further consideration.

James Mason's biography is typical of the national socialist faithful of his generation.[45] Born in 1952 in Chillicothe, Ohio, Mason's awakening to the world of extremist political activism took place with the onset of puberty. This awakening was, moreover, primarily oppositional rather than racial. Mason despised the *status quo*, and in those days of the mid-1960s the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing. Mason recalls being on the whole rather admiring of his black classmates.[46] A common thread running through the biographies of many current movement activists is a perception of always being oppositional, always different. In this, it is the availability of an oppositional milieu rather than the persuasiveness of a particular ideology that will often first draw the activist to the movement. Mason is no exception:

> My interests always diverged from the mainstream. I rather don't like competition, preferring to have a field more or less to myself. If necessary, I'll always invent one of my own. I've seen it that what I pick out early often has a way of catching on. Not surprising that when that happens I usually move on. When just beginning in this [national socialism] about 1966 or 1967, I felt absolutely confident I'd make some mark, if only through sheer default.[47]

His epiphany came from a viewing of a news report of an American Nazi Party march in Chicago. Here was a movement that was both oppositional and universally despised by Americans. Better, it was led by a charismatic and fearless fighter of his own race. Here was a movement to which Mason could belong. At the age of fourteen, a life-long national socialist was born.

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took place between skinheads and anti-racist activists. The highlight of the celebration, however, was the appearance of a group of naked anarchists who painted themselves blue to illustrate 'the naked truth about fascism' ('Swedish neo-Nazi march ends in violence', *Reuters Wire Service*, 17 August 1996).

45 The primary source of Mason's history are author interviews with James Mason, 28 November 1996 and 7 May 1998; and M. M. Jenkins's introduction to James Mason, *Siege!* (Denver, CO: Storm Books 1992). Cf. Aaron Garland's interview with Mason, 'Politics beyond the pale', *Ohm Clock*, no. 3, spring 1995, 4–11; and 'W.O.T.A.N. interviews James Mason', *W.O.T.A.N.*, 2 October 1996, 2. W.O.T.A.N. is the voice of the British organization Combat 18. For a tongue-in-cheek interview, see the mordant comments of Alan Prendergast, 'Beyond the pale', *Denver Westword*, vol. 16, no. 48, 28 July–3 August 1993. The interview was supplied to the author by Aaron Garland at the suggestion of James Mason, proving conclusively that, contrary to popular opinion, Nazis can have a sense of humour.

46 Mason notes that his impression not only of Blacks, but of Jews as well, was on the whole rather positive in his early years (Mason, *Siege!*, 11–12).

47 Interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996.

Determined to be a Nazi, what could a poor boy from backwater Ohio do to contact these distant urban heroes? Showing the same remarkable ingenuity that many another fledgling race activist would demonstrate in establishing his first tenuous link to the movement,[48] Mason made contact with a classmate who had a reputation of being 'something of a Hitler Youth', and thus was given a book, *Extremism U.S.A.*, which contained a picture of ANP West Coast activist Allen Vincent in front of a truck emblazoned with the address of the Berkeley, California party headquarters.[49] A letter to Vincent quickly produced the Arlington, Virginia address of Rockwell's ANP. James Mason became a dues paying member at the age of fourteen.

Soon finding himself in trouble for chronic truancy, Mason saw the opportunity to leave Chillicothe behind for the more exciting world of ANP headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. A call to ANP central resulted in a conversation with Mason's hero, William Pierce, who told him (perhaps unwisely given his age) to hop a bus and come on down. Mason was then still a minor at sixteen. Pierce for his part was indeed concerned about Mason's age, thus nothing was at first put in writing and Pierce paid Mason's expenses out of his own pocket.[50]

Mason loved the life of the party activist. Indeed, his enthusiasm for doing 'whatever needed to be done' was less than universally popular with older and less daring neo-Nazis. It would be the first, but hardly the last, conflict Mason would have with the movement's conservative majority. Nonetheless, when Mason reached eighteen, he was sworn in as a full-fledged member of the National Socialist White People's Party, Matt Koehl's successor to the martyred Rockwell's ANP. But Koehl's leadership fragmented the movement, a split that ironically sent a small portion of the national socialist movement into a revolutionary direction.

The ideological basis of this split centred on the competing theories of mass action versus the creation of a revolutionary vanguard,[51] although personality played at least as great a role in the movement's atomization. At

48 As one striking example, Sweden's Tommy Rydén recalls, during his own small-town boyhood, reading a newspaper account at the age of thirteen of the American Ku Klux Klan. Putting together scraps of information from a number of sources, Rydén was able to obtain the address of American Klan leader Bill Wilkinson (interview with Tommy Rydén, Linköping, Sweden, 28 July 1995). In a not atypical denouement to this story, Wilkinson, who was most helpful to Rydén's early endeavours, turned out to be a long-time FBI informant. For a full interview with Tommy Rydén, see Jeffrey Kaplan and Leonard Weinberg, *The Euro-American Radical Right* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 1998), ch. 8. On Wilkinson, see George and Wilcox, 373–4.

49 John Carpenter, *Extremism U.S.A.* (Phoenix, AZ: Extremism USA 1964). The photograph Mason refers to is on page 137. The book actually says remarkably little about right-wing extremists, saving greater vitriol for the left. In both cases, the text is an exercise in middle-of-the-road 'Americanism' of little historical value. The classmate soon became disillusioned and dropped out of the movement. He committed suicide in 1992 or 1993 (interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996). Cf. Mason, *Siege!*, 13.

50 Interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996.

51 For a brief discussion of the mass v. revolutionary action theory, see Kaplan, 'Right wing violence', 57.

the core of the split was the conflict between Pierce and Rockwell's successor, Matt Koehl.[52] Fuelling the split was, on the one hand, the generational shift between the younger activists and the older leaders. But, more fundamentally, the volatile period of the late 1960s with its primacy of left-wing radicalism deeply affected the younger national socialists. The key figure to arise from this group of youthful revolutionaries was Joseph Tommasi.

> Joseph Tommasi, as founder of the NSLF [National Socialist Liberation Front], was the first of a new breed. A hero and a martyr to the Cause. What he wanted most was to provide the movement with its much overdue HIT TEAM and not to set himself up as some sort of cheap, tin horn demi-god like the rest. Tommasi personified the kind of man we MUST have: those desiring to serve the movement—and do so with great facility—not pose around in gaudy uniforms as 'Hollywood Nazis'.[53]

Tommasi is little remembered today, but he was nonetheless a seminal figure.[54] On the one hand, he was forthright in his faith in American exceptionalism: 'White people in America are not like those who participated in past European struggles. Americans tend to go against the "grain" on practically everything. We are not Europeans and won't respond as Europeans.'[55] Joseph Tommasi emerged from the fractious California cadre of Rockwell's American Nazi Party that, in those days, included such figures as Allen Vincent and James Warner. Even there, he was less than universally admired.[56] A deeply committed national socialist, Tommasi held out for some years after the Commander's assassination before he too fell victim to Matt Koehl's ongoing purge of the party. But where so many others similarly disgusted with Koehl and company departed for other belief systems throughout the radical right, Tommasi was a national socialist true believer who, until his expulsion from the party, believed in Koehl to the end.[57] His analysis of the sad state of affairs of the post-Rockwell movement marked the first attempt to adapt the stereotypical Nazi subculture of the 1950s to the youth culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The results were intended to be revolutionary, and they were.

52 The conflict was irreconcilable and Pierce left for the National Youth Alliance, a front group formed by Willis Carto that grew out of the 1968 George Wallace presidential campaign. The ideological point of contention centred around Pierce's charge that Koehl was a 'cultist' but, at a deeper level, Pierce had already begun his shift from the movement's typical conservatism to an embrace of revolutionary violence (interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996).

53 James Mason,in the journal *Siege!*, vol. 11, no. 5, May 1982.

54 Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 301–7.

55 Joseph Tommasi, 'Building the revolutionary party', in Mason, *Siege!*, 383.

56 One former member who left the movement at his wife's insistence in the early 1970s recalls Tommasi's derisive nickname, 'Tomato Joe', given both for his Italian surname and less than Nordic complexion. This same source recalls that, while many were privately caustic about Tommasi's appearance and ethnicity, he was nonetheless respected as 'a total fanatic', although many of the West Coast group would have nothing to do with the Universal Order or Tommasi's extremism (interview with an Odinist adherent, name withheld by request, 7 January 1997).

57 Interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996.

The NSLF was founded in 1969 but, unknown to most, the real inspiration from (well) behind the scenes was William Pierce. This was odd in that, according to James Mason's recollections, Pierce and Tommasi couldn't abide one another. Yet, from the late 1960s to the present, whenever violence in national socialist circles is seriously contemplated, Pierce is usually involved, albeit always at a safe remove. Thus, Pierce conceived the NSLF as a front group to compete with the radical left on the college campuses. Tommasi, whose speech at the second party congress in 1970 electrified some and appalled most with his denunciation of the conservative majority of the party, by chance coincided with Pierce's split with Koehl, and he was thus the ideal candidate to lead the NSLF.[58]

The NSLF concept did not really go anywhere until 1973, however, when Tommasi was unceremoniously booted out of the National Socialist White People's Party by Matt Koehl for his un-national socialist behaviour of smoking marijuana in party headquarters and entertaining young women within those hallowed precincts.[59] In 1973 or 1974, Tommasi's slogan—which remains current to this day in national socialist circles—became known to such East Coast neo-Nazis as James Mason, and in that year too the NSLF held its foundational meeting. Tommasi's dictum—'THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE FEW OF US WILLING TO GET OUR HANDS DIRTY. POLITICAL TERROR: It's the only thing they understand'—appeared on a poster featuring a .38 calibre pistol and a swastika. It would not be the last time Tommasi would borrow slogans, style and eventually even dress and physical appearance from the New Left of the 1960s. Even more striking in this vein was the slogan that opened Tommasi's *Building the Revolutionary Party* pamphlet, the Maoist motto: POLITICAL POWER STEMS FROM THE BARREL OF A GUN.[60] Indeed, even the group's name is strongly reminiscent of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front while the name of the group's journal, *Siege!*, was borrowed from the Weather Underground.[61]

The NSLF's revolutionary ideology was based on a rejection of the 'conservative' theory of mass action that Tommasi believed was paralysing the national socialist movement. Under the mass action doctrine, no serious anti-state actions were contemplated until the party could build up a coalition of supporters that would in aggregate form a mass movement capable of mounting a popular revolution. By 1969 it was clear that if any movement was capable of building a revolutionary mass, it would be a movement of the left rather than the right. By 1974 it was clear that a left-wing revolution too was not to be. Clearly, to delay the revolution until the slumbering American masses could be awakened was tantamount to a vow of permanent impotence.

58 Interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996.

59 James Mason recalls that a lesser known charge of financial impropriety was lodged against Tommasi by California Koehl loyalists (interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996).

60 Tommasi, 'Building the revolutionary party', in Mason, *Siege!*, 381. The original NSLF poster is reproduced on page 19.

61 Mason, *Siege!*, 5.

So, based on the model of the Weather Underground and other leftist guerrilla formations of the day, the NSLF would 'seize the moment', regardless of how unpromising that moment might appear to the uninitiated.

Certainly, 1974 was a decidedly unpromising moment to seize. Thus, of necessity, Tommasi formulated an early version of 'leaderless resistance', or lone wolf tactics, that would not come into vogue in the movement until the late 1980s when the failure of the Silent Brotherhood's ill-starred revolutionary activism moved Louis Beam to write the original 'Leaderless Resistance' tract and William Pierce to promote the concept in *Hunter*, his fictional follow-up to *The Turner Diaries*.[62] The credo of the NSLF was violent revolutionary action, and its propaganda in the pages of its original journal *Defiance*, and the more well-known successor to that publication, *Siege!*, suggested that the NSLF had already formed armed cells and launched the 'first blows against the empire'.[63]

According to NSLF propaganda, the group's foundational meeting held on 2 March 1974—a full five years after Tommasi created the group—hosted 'forty-three National Socialist revolutionaries' in El Monte, California.[64] It was at this meeting that the mass action strategy was officially put to rest in favour of revolution now. The NSLF was conceived as an activist, and thus violent, revolutionary organization. It was structured with an above-ground membership that may have numbered perhaps forty or more, and a tiny underground contingent of lone wolf revolutionaries.[65] The underground core of the NSLF never numbered more than four, including Karl Hand and David Rust:

> Yes, the N.S.L.F. of Tommasi had four persons who carried out the illegal activities. The remainder, the majority, weren't that much different from the N.S.W.P.P. [National Socialist White People's Party] members except they were a lot more forward thinking.[66]

62 Jeffrey Kaplan, 'Leaderless Resistance', *Journal of Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1997, 80–95. Beam's now ubiquitous 'Leaderless Resistance' essay may now be obtained on his homepage via Don Black's Stormfront website. It can also be found reproduced in full in James K. Campbell, W*eapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism* (Seminole, FL: Interpact Press 1997), 151–5, and Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 503–11.

63 Joseph Tommasi, 'Strategy for revolution', in Mason, *Siege!*, 378–80. 'Blows against the empire' was the title of an early 1970s Jefferson Starship album that held a certain vogue in right- as well as left-wing circles of the day (e-mail conversation with former national spokesman of the Minutemen, R. N. Taylor). Tommasi and the NSLF took the same playful approach to hippie culture. See, for example, 'Big Brother and the Holding Company', *Siege!*, no. 2, 1974, 5; the article concerns an attack on the 'law and order' pre-occupation of the right wing, picturing police in contemporary leftist terms as 'pigs' paid to enforce the American *status quo* (Big Brother and the Holding Company was also the name of Janis Joplin's first band).

64 Tommasi, 'Strategy for revolution', in Mason, *Siege!*, 379.

65 Interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996. On founding Order member David Lane's revolutionary theories, see Mattias Gardell, 'David Lane', in Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 167–9. For primary source documents on Lane's 'Wotan' theories, see David Lane, 'Wotan is coming', *WAR*, April 1993, or '88 precepts', in Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power*, 492–502.

66 Letter from James Mason, 16 December 1996. Mason was responding to the suggestion that this core/peripheral membership was at the root of differing claims by both Tommasi and Mason of the level of NSLF support, which was variously reported as either 4 or more than 40.

James Mason was a close friend and collaborator of Tommasi and the group, but he never officially joined the NSLF. However, within a year, Tommasi was dead, and it was not long thereafter that his successors David Hand and Karl Rust were imprisoned for acts of leaderless resistance. The underground in reality died with Tommasi.[67] The legacy of the tiny movement, however, is far greater than its meagre victories would suggest. The primary accomplishment of the NSLF was that it was the first national socialist group in the post-war period to attempt to adapt to the times. Tommasi had no qualms about taking lessons from the radical left, and he had no interest in the puritanical outlook of the post-war radical right. Nor was Tommasi a man to deceive himself that the world of explicit national socialism would ever be able to attract a significant enough following in the United States to justify the movement's mass action theory. If the chaotic year 1969 was not the time to seize the gun, then when would it be? Thus, the credo of the NSLF was one of action, and action now.

Yet the NSLF could not escape the reality of its minuscule numbers. It was fine for Tommasi to borrow the communist belief in a cell structure, but the truth was that, had the NSLF's combatant core formed a fighting cell, it would have had quite literally to put all its eggs in one basket! On an ideological level, however, it was not difficult to find a rationale, and a hope, for ultimate victory in the face of overwhelming odds. For one, the national socialist faith in the United States had always been at heart religious and deeply millenarian. Ultimate victory was assured to the faithful simply by virtue of their faith and their ultimate 'rightness'.

On a more immediate level, Tommasi believed with Rockwell and Julius Evola and Hitler, too, that the masses were in essence female, waiting to be swept off their collective feet by a leader whose daring and charisma would guide them into the timeless racialist dream.[68] Thus the suicidal audacity of the NSLF's 'operations'. Thus too the ease with which the organization was smashed and surviving members jailed. David Rust, Tommasi's first successor, went down on firearms charges. Karl Hand, Tommasi's final successor, was imprisoned briefly in 1980 for firing a gun into the home of a black neighbour, and then received a fifteen-year sentence for other weapons violations and attempted murder.[69]

The shell of the organization carried on, at least in name, for several years after Tommasi's 1975 murder. By then, James Mason was something of a full-fledged member by virtue of his having been sent an unsolicited membership card by Karl Hand, and a few other activists soldiered on as

67 Mason, *Siege!*, 104. Interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996.

68 For a view of the truth of the axiom holding the masses to be essentially feminine, see the autobiography of Leni Riefenstahl, *Leni Riefenstahl: A Memoir* (New York: St Martin's Press 1992). For a theoretical view, see Julius Evola, *Revolt against the Modern World* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International 1995), 157–66.

69 George and Wilcox, 338.

well. By 1978 the NSLF's mantle fell by default to Mason, with the same Allen Vincent, whose picture in *Extremism U.S.A.* had so impressed a young Mason, handling party propaganda.[70] Like many another right-wing group whose non-existent cadres are filled out by the deeds of others, the NSLF's journal, *Siege!*, which went on under the editorship of James Mason until 1986, was not reticent about either claiming as its own or simply cheering on any act of white racial violence. In reality, however, the NSLF as a combatant group was dead, although its influence did not end there. Indeed, in an emotional farewell to Tommasi, Mason writes: '. . . it were now as if Tommasi never went away. He'd have admired Oklahoma City. "Pray for Victory and not an end to slaughter."'[71]

> *All we wanted was peace on earth man, but you guys are the ones who made us take our shovels and turn 'em into guns.*
> —Charles Manson[72]

> *All live for ATWA [Air, Trees, Water, Animals] or no one lives. All must have a one world government, money, army, all in order to bring order fast and reset all ATWA for life itself and all life support systems set in order, balance and God's will.*
> —Charles Manson[73]

Charles Manson and the Universal Order

James Mason continued for some time to publish *Siege!* as a journal, and to head his own one-man band, the short-lived National Socialist Movement, which by Mason's own admission soon foundered.[74] Then came Mason's discovery of the teachings of Charles Manson. This association ended Mason's connection with his old comrades. Manson urged Mason to jettison the NSLF in favour of a new grouping, the Universal Order, and as a result Mason and Karl Hand amicably agreed to part ways, with Mason holding *Siege!* as the organ of the Universal Order, and Hand keeping *Defiance* as the publication of the NSLF.[75]

Despite Mason's earlier contention that he was not among the movement's 'religionists',[76] his adulation of the Manson Family and his tireless efforts

70 Interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996.
71 Ibid.
72 Michael Moynahan, 'Charles Manson', *Seconds*, no. 32. n.d., 64.
73 Charles Manson, 'Quotes from Manson', *ATWA*, e-text document copyrighted by Sandra Good, 5 November 1996.
74 Mason, *Siege!*, vol. 11, no. 5, May 1982. It was in any case seen primarily as a personal vehicle for Mason's views. Mason notes that this was very much in keeping with the one-man outfits common to the national socialist scene (interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996).
75 This peaceful parting of the ways is so atypical of the fractious national socialist milieu that today Mason calls it 'one of the most decent and honorable things anyone has ever done within the movement' (interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996).
76 Mason, *Siege!*, 87. For a discussion of the religionist/anti-religionist split in national socialist ranks, see Kaplan, 'Religiosity and the radical right'. Interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996.

through his current vehicle, the Universal Order, to present Manson to the international movement as an avatar of the coming national socialist revolution was a religious quest *par excellence*. From 1982 until the journal's demise, *Siege!* became primarily a vehicle for the glorification of Charles Manson.

Mason himself was no stranger to the occult aspects of national socialism and, like so many of the movement's 1960s generation, he was drawn for a time to the teachings of Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan. Mason notes that, in 1969, he purchased a copy of Anton LaVey's LP *The Satanic Mass* from a fellow ANP trooper, and had 'cherished it ever since'.[77] But while satanism, particularly in its Church of Satan guise, was no stranger to the world of national socialism, the figure of Charles Manson was quite something else. The selection of Charles Manson and his largely female following as national socialist heroes seems as unlikely at first glance as was the elevation of Horst Wessel from dissolute street fighter to the selfless martyr of the original NSDP.

Certainly, the Universal Order's insistence on this recognition of the role and leadership of Charles Manson has not met with much success among the conservative majority of national socialists. It has also encountered significant criticism among the fighters of the skinhead movement, young men who for the most part were not born until after the sensational capture and trial of the Manson Family.[78] The reaction to the Manson thesis by the young readers of *Resistance* magazine was so overwhelming that the editor, George Eric Hawthorne, presented in the next issue a full-fledged debate on the proposition from two of his magazine's readers.

But there is more here than meets the eye, and the Universal Order's fealty to the legacy of the Manson Family deserves some attention, both for what it has to teach of the state of the contemporary movement and, of more pressing import, for the key adherents this movement has gathered in both the United States and Europe. The appeal of Manson is well summed up by Michael Moynahan, whose Storm Publications brought James Mason's early writings to a considerably wider audience through the publication of Mason's book *Siege!*:

> Manson is extremely important, as he is one of those rare individuals capable of operating on many levels at once. This applies equally to his life, message, and actions. I am less interested in the murders he allegedly directed, and I don't think anyone will ever know exactly what really happened and what lead up to them. I am much more compelled by Manson's mind and what he has to say. For whatever reasons (and it is made even more puzzling by his criminal background) he often

77 Mason, *Siege!*, 362. Today Mason states that, while he continues to admire Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey, he remains convinced that Satan 'couldn't care less' about our doings, and if he did, he would most likely appear as 'a three-piece suited, Ivy league politician' wanting your vote to move into 'The Brave New World. Or the New World Order' (interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996).

78 Mason took his case for Manson to the skinhead and White Power rock music world in James Mason, 'Charles Manson: illusion vs. reality', *Resistance*, no. 4, spring 1995, 20–2.

> verbalizes incredibly erudite and obscure concepts which can be traced back to much earlier native European spirituality. There is no doubt that he expresses some very deep, subconscious thoughts which very few people are aware of or even understand in the present day and age. The fact that he is able to instinctively convey these things is unique among any modern man of public renown.[79]

The question of Manson's resurgent appeal is of considerable importance. While only a small minority of the national socialist race movement has embraced Manson, the rebirth of his celebrity among a broad spectrum of disaffected youth is undeniable. In an interesting exploration of the mystique of radical individualism—and indeed the aura of evil—as a cultural phenomenon, art historian Stoddard Martin sees Manson as but one of a long line of figures whom he dubs the 'artiste manqué'.[80] For Martin, the *artiste manqué* is a man out of time. He is an artist burning for recognition, but one who is all too well aware that he has yet to realize fully on the canvas of his own cultural reality the full implications of his vision. Unable to achieve the glory the *artiste manqué* feels is his due, and driven by a quest for expression that he can never fully transform from the ether of ideas to the physical world, '. . . the phenomenon of artistic frustration is likely to exacerbate tendencies to shock . . . challenge conventional morality, explore areas of decay, parade the ego, cast one's personae as messiahs, and sensationalize crime'.[81] With this conception in mind, Martin offers a long line of contemporary *artistes manqués*. Two of these, Hitler and Manson, abandoned their art to become men of action. Others, Herbert Marcuse, de Sade and Nietzsche, for example, would remain men of ideas—often with great success—but would never realize the level of recognition that they believed was their due, and would always live in an adversarial relationship with their respective societies.

Yet, for all of the long history of this personality type, there was something special about the 1960s, and particularly the pivotal year of 1969. The 1960s were a time of instant gratification. Manson could never display the patience or doggedness of an Adolf Hitler in achieving his ends. Moreover, 1969 was the year of the Rolling Stones' Altamont concert, the success of the Beatles' *White Album* and their subsequent break-up, and the beginning of the Manson Family's apocalyptic Helter Skelter plan for race war that foresaw the imminent emergence of the Family to assume ultimate terrestrial power. If ever a life was lived as an artistic statement, it was Manson's in the late

79 Interview with Michael Moynahan, 19 December 1996. Indeed, Manson's recorded musings can be hypnotic, at one moment seemingly touched by crazed genius and, at another, so obscure as to be incomprehensible, or even mad. James Mason notes in this regard that he once sent a CD of Manson talking to a psychiatrist of his acquaintance who wrote back that Manson 'demonstrated a lot of "Free Association" commonly connected with schizophrenia. But that immediately gave way to other considerations like simply being under-socialized, no social skills, or perhaps genius' (letter from James Mason, 16 December 1996).

80 Stoddard Martin, *Art, Messianism and Crime: A Study of Antinomianism in Modern Literature and Lives* (New York: St Martin's Press 1986).

81 Ibid., 3.

1960s. Not surprisingly, those most susceptible to the appeal of Manson's leadership today are drawn from the occult fringes of the movement. Many are artists in their own right, and the national socialist life in the present day is nothing if not a particularly theatrical art statement.

The Universal Order thus has been able to gather only a relative handful of adherents and hangers-on in the United States and in Europe. It is in any case a 'state of mind' movement rather than an organization with a membership *per se*.[82] But its primary mission, to create around the aura of Charles Manson a kind of soteriological cult, has met with some success. Manson is indeed more of a ubiquitous cult figure today than ever before. From the playful 'Charlie Don't Surf' T-shirts that became something of a fad in California, to the recording of Manson's songs by such popular rock bands as Guns and Roses and Sonic Youth,[83] to the appearance of Manson-related websites, the visage of Charles Manson has become well known to a new youth generation. Indeed, a profitable cottage industry has sprung up around Manson, with CDs of Manson's music and words becoming available again, with articles about Manson proliferating throughout the underground, and with publishing houses bringing a number of Manson-related books back into print.[84]

The outlines of the official version of the Manson Family are well known. Vincent Bugliosi's book *Helter Skelter* and the movie based on this text etched this version deeply into the public consciousness. In this scenario, Manson, the crazed leader of a largely female drug and sex cult, became frustrated at his lack of success in the music business. Enraged, he brooded in the California desert until the Beatles' 1969 *White Album* inspired him to invent an apocalyptic scheme that he dubbed 'Helter Skelter'. In this version of racial apocalypse, an imminent race war in the United States would be the signal for the Family to hide in a deep hole in the desert until the inevitable victory of African Americans. However, because, in Manson's view, African Americans are neither intellectually nor temperamentally equipped to govern,

82 Interview with Michael Moynahan, 19 December 1996.

83 Sonic Youth's video, *Death Valley 69*, graphically recreates the murder scene at the residence of Sharon Tate and Roman Polanski over a crashing soundtrack and lyrics drawn from the Manson trial. It is an underground classic today, much sought after but seldom seen.

84 Manson CDs are available from White Devil Records and Storm Books. The most fascinating of these is the double CD *Manson Speaks* on White Devil Records. Zines featuring Manson articles are too numerous to mention. Some of the more interesting Manson books to return to the market include the 'lost classic', John Gilmore and Ron Kenner, *The Garbage People* (Los Angeles: Amok 1995); Nuel Emmons, *Manson in His Own Words* (New York: Grove Press 1986); Nikolas Schreck, *The Manson File* (Los Angeles: Amok 1988); and of course, the old war horse, Vincent Bugliosi with Curt Gentry, *Helter Skelter* (New York: W. W. Norton 1974), has returned in book and tape versions. In addition, Manson Family members and alumni such as Susan Atkins and Charles 'Tex' Watson have reappeared in the marketplace. Manson, for his part, in *Manson Speaks* states that *Manson in His Own Words* has little to do with anything he said, and even the semi-legendary *The Garbage People* is garbage, having nothing to do with him, despite his nearly eighteen-year-long relationship with its author. *Manson in His Own Words* raises particular ire. According to Manson: 'Is there no way to stop [that] book? That thing has been a curse. It's destroyed us all, [and] ATWA for over ten years' (*Lies about Charles Manson*, e-text copyrighted by Sandra Good, 2 January 1997).

representatives of the black race would rush to the emergent Manson group and beg them to take the reigns of power. When the race war was not immediately forthcoming, the murders for which the Manson Family was charged were committed with the idea that the outrages would be blamed on Blacks and thus ignite the longed-for war between the races.[85] Other sources embellished this already lurid tale with the trappings of satanism and diabolical doings via the alleged ties between Manson and the Process Church. These titillating tidbits were contributed in the first edition of Ed Sanders's *The Family*,[86] but were deleted from subsequent printings when the satanic Process Church of the Final Judgment, which the author had linked to Manson, filed a lawsuit in Chicago against both the book and its author. (The lawsuit was settled out of court on 6 March 1972.)[87]

Lurid stuff indeed. The story according to Manson and his associates is considerably less sensational. In this version, the murders were committed for a more rational, if less colourful purpose: to get Family member Bobby Beausoliel out of jail by committing 'copycat' murders that would convince the authorities that Beausoliel could not be guilty of the murder (of Gary Hinman) for which he had been arrested on 6 August 1969.[88] Manson pictures himself as the victim of a monstrous judicial frame-up in which he was denied the right to defend himself, cross examine witnesses or in any way present the court—or subsequent parole boards—with the truth. This version of the truth centres on the contention that radical environmentalism, not Helter Skelter, was the ideological core of the group of cast-offs and runaways that gathered around Manson because no one else wanted them (thus the original impetus for the self-view of garbage people as both a literal description of their food source and their view of themselves as the refuse of the American dream).[89] The incarceration of Manson is thus facilitating the destruction of the ecology and, indeed, the world.

In terms of the wider youth culture, the Manson message does have a resonance. His primary message of rebellion—the nation's betrayal of its young—is rooted in the 1960s, but resonates again all the more strongly in the rapidly changing environment of the new millennium. This sense of alienation from, and abandonment by, the country and its government pervades Manson's teachings. Moreover, in recent years, Manson's rhetoric has become more openly racial and antisemitic, providing a key to the suggestion by James Mason and others that Charles Manson is the movement's only hope for victory.

85 Bugliosi.

86 Ed Sanders, *The Family* (New York: E. P. Dutton 1971).

87 Letter from Father Christian of the Boston Chapter of the Process Church of the Final Judgment to William Bainbridge, 9 March 1972: University of California Santa Barbara, J. Gordon Melton archives, Process section.

88 *Lies about Charles Manson*.

89 'Where does the garbage go, as we have tin cans and garbage alongside the road, and oil slicks in your water, so you have people, and I am one of your garbage people . . .' (Charles Manson, *The Testimony of Charles Manson, November 19, 1970*, e-text, copyrighted by Sandra Good).

Racial separation has always been a facet of Manson's thought, no doubt born both of his impoverished rural roots and experience as a career prisoner.

Over the years, this racialism would become more pronounced, adding the denunciation of Jews in the Hollywood recording industry. It is little wonder that there would be a natural connection between Manson and a new generation of national socialists. The appeal of this racialist and antisemitic message resonates in the revolutionary fringe of the movement through an uncritical acceptance of the apocalyptic Helter Skelter race war scenario. In this conception, whether it was truth or prosecutorial fiction is of little import. It is taken throughout the popular culture as truth, and could not but attract like-minded adherents.

To James Mason, the Manson allure as the prototypical national socialist *Führer* goes much deeper. In the pages of *Siege!*, after 1982 when the journal became in effect the organ of the Universal Order, the case for Manson as a movement archetype is put forth in depth. This appeal goes beyond the Manson Family's alleged chiliastic dreams of race war, a fantasy that has never lost its allure to the American movement. On a deeper level, Mason points out the painful fact that Charles Manson's following was primarily female. In a movement that manages to attract very few women, this is no small matter.[90]

Mason's view is simple and to the point: '. . . good as it now poses is limp prick at best and people who are still alive sense this. Hence, the fascination with "evil" which at least has some life to it. Hitler being the best example. Manson being another. Women flocked to them both.'[91] Implicit in this analysis is a critique of contemporary feminism that speaks much to the Manson mystique. Manson is unabashedly paternalistic, and the women in the Manson group do not hesitate to point this out as the key to their attraction to the man and to the Family. This anti-feminist critique is inextricably intertwined with the approach the Manson loyalists take to the radical ecology movement. Sandra Good, upon her release from prison, claims to have been in contact with such radical environmental groups as Earth First!, the Sea Shepherds and the Animal Liberation Front, while Manson himself states that he 'started the root thoughts for most or a lot' of their ideology.[92] One of the self-described Manson women describes this view well:

> Women are especially responsible [for the environment] because woman is the earth. It's her nature and job to take care of the earth. Women have been raising and holding children with fears and insecurities to go for the paychecks, to uphold the present way of life. Women fear real change and reflect their fear upon the children, and it's her fear that holds down positive change. The USA is living in a matriarchy

90 Mason, *Siege!*, 345–6.

91 Interview with James Mason, 28 November 1996.

92 *ATWA*. On the radical environmental movement itself, see Bron Taylor, *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism*, International Environmental Policy and Theory Series (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1995).

> centered in fear and money, not earth and survival and life on earth is dying because of it. Males for the most part are reflections of their mothers' and other women's fears.[93]

The Manson murders are thus of little consequence to the adherents of the Universal Order given the apocalyptic intent of the crimes.[94] Manson in this conception emerges as the ultimate realist. The leader who had torn aside the veils of illusory sentiment and the blinders of 'system lies' to reach true freedom in that Nietzschean plane that transcends mundane conceptions of good and evil. It is a detachment that James Mason himself aspires to, but even such repugnant apologias as the dismissal of the murder of Sharon Tate's unborn baby with the contemptuous comment, 'With regard to the eight-month-old fetus Tate was carrying, it was, after all, a Jew',[95] ring hollow before Manson's amoral example.

Finally, it is the apocalyptic messianism inherent in the Manson legend that is a prime attraction to the race movement. Here, once again, it matters little what the truth of the Helter Skelter scenario might be. It is the legend of race war and the emergence of a white elite to terrestrial power that is a perennial movement fantasy. From the anonymous *Franklin Letters* of the 1950s to the contemporary *Turner Diaries*, the dream has never wavered.[96] All that is needed is a leader, a man on a holy mission to bring an end to the suffering of the faithful and lead them from the darkness of persecution and rejection into the light of a new dawn. For James Mason and others, why not Charles Manson, and why not now? For his part, Manson, while denying any claims to leadership, had this to say on the subject at the time of his 1986 parole hearing:

> Your government invented the Watergate cover-up but never did say what they were really covering up [was] a Holy War invoked from the soul. When Manson, aka Lord Krishna, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, the Buddha, by the press and THE PEOPLE VS. Manson, you condemned yourselves. You condemned yourselves in the so-called Manson family, putting the son of God on the prison cross again. I broke no law, not God's nor Man's law. God knows this, the Holy Spirit knows; and anyone in the truth knows. What you are buying and selling in God's name, you will suffer. With your own judgments convicting yourselves of being Satan, the anti-Christ, you stand your world on fire. I am Abraxas, the son of God, the son of

93 *ATWA*.

94 The import of the crimes themselves appear to be of only passing interest to those associated with the Universal Order or sympathetic to Manson as a national socialist icon. Witness, for example, Michael Moynahan noting in an interview that he was born in 1969, 'the year of the fork', referring to the fork left in Leno Labianca's stomach, or Vidhar von Herske's caustic observation that Manson is being held in prison seemingly forever despite the fact that he killed no one (interview with Michael Moynahan, 18 November 1996, and letter from Vidhar von Herske, 22 August 1996).

95 Mason, *Siege!*, 328.

96 Anonymous, *The John Franklin Letters* (New York: The Book Mailer Inc. 1959); Andrew Macdonald [i.e. William Pierce], *The Turner Diaries* (Arlington, VA: National Vanguard Books 1978).

> Darkness, and I stand behind ALL the courts in the world. Until I get my rights, no one has rights. I'm God's messenger from and in the truth, brother and son to all men. (666 your computers will print the same read out to your book brains.) Until I get the same rights my fathers had, I will stand in Nixon's place, convicted as the false prophet, as fire burns and the children starve and the land dies along with the air, as the wildlife becomes poisoned and the trees are being cut so fast that wildlife will not survive NOT WITHOUT WORLD CHANGE.
>
> I did say I 'did' invoke a balance for life on Earth. From behind the time locks of courtrooms and worlds of darkness, I did let loose devils and demons with the power of scorpions to torment. I did unseal seven seals and seven jars in accord with the judgments placed upon me, upon my circle. All who had no forgiveness will have no heart, and did set loose upon the earth destruction in the balance of their own judgments. These are the people who gave their own children no chance for survival. These are the people locked in death wishes which they project into the minds of the children.[97]

This is a powerful apocalyptic claim for leadership by a man who steadfastly denies any wish to lead. It has thus far had little resonance in the race movement beyond the fringes of the national socialist and satanist subcultures. The relative success—or lack of same—of this call for Manson's ascendancy will reveal much of the future direction of the occult paths of national socialism.

JEFFREY KAPLAN is the author of *Encyclopedia of White Power: A Sourcebook on the Radical Racist Right* (AltaMira Press 2000), *Radical Religion in America: Millenarian Movements from the Far Right to the Children of Noah* (Syracuse 1997), *The Emergence of an Euro-American Radical Right* (with Leonard Weinberg) (Rutgers 1998), *Beyond the Mainstream: The Emergence of Religious Pluralism in Finland, Estonia and Russia* (Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura 2000), and is co-editing with Bron Taylor *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (Cassell/Continuum, forthcoming 2002). He is currently teaching at the University of Alaska Anchorage and is working with the Stockholm International Forum on Conscience and Humanity: Combating Intolerance for the government of Sweden.

97 'Manson's 1986 Parole Hearing Statement' (available on the Internet).